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Operational activities for development

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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation

Letter dated 18 January 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On 9 and 10 November in Marrakesh, the Kingdom of Morocco hosted the International Conference on Gender-Responsive Budgeting, which was organized jointly by the Ministry of the Economy and Finance of Morocco and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The Conference led to the adoption of the Marrakesh Declaration enclosed herewith (see annex).

The Conference made it possible to capitalize on the progress made thus far and on the commitments of the international community with regard to gender-responsive budgeting and the integration of the principles of equity and equality into budget planning and the assessment of public policy effectiveness. The Conference also saw the launch of the National Centre of Excellence for Learning and Innovation in Gender-Responsive Budgeting.

I should be grateful if you could have the Declaration circulated as an official document of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme and UN-Women, the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council and the sixty seventh session of the General Assembly under agenda item 25 concerning operational activities for development.

(*Signed*) Mohammed **Loulichki**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

13-21403 (E) 240113 280113

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Annex to the letter dated 18 January 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

International Conference on Gender-Responsive Budgeting: "Sharing Knowledge and shaping budgetary policies for the realization of gender equality"

Marrakesh Declaration

We, the participants of the International Conference on Gender-Responsive Budgeting entitled "Sharing Knowledge and shaping budgetary policies for the realization of gender equality", having met at the invitation of the Kingdom of Morocco on 9 and 10 November 2012 in Marrakesh,

Expressing our gratitude to the Kingdom of Morocco for organizing and hosting the Conference and for its active participation and joint initiative with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women),

Expressing our appreciation to all of the participants for their attendance and the high standard of the discussions, and expressing our gratitude to the international and regional organizations that attended the Conference,

Noting that the protracted economic downturn caused by the 2008 economic and financial crisis has exacerbated insecurity, disparities and the risk of exclusion and marginalization,

Recognizing that the challenge of financing equality and combating poverty and vulnerability has become more momentous as a result of the crisis, and that austerity measures and budget cuts have affected the financial resources of organizations that promote non-discrimination and gender equality, reducing their capacity to combat discrimination and inequality,

Convinced of the importance of initiatives to create innovative development models ensuring greater sustainability and respect for human dignity,

Stressing the need to rethink the role of the State and of public policy in order to promote a more inclusive and equitable form of sustainable development by identifying clear goals through a results-based approach tailored to the circumstances of each country,

Reaffirming that, at a time when States are required to make their public policies more effective, gender-responsive budgeting offers unique opportunities to focus on the specific needs of women and men by delegating decision-making to the local level in close partnership with the local population,

Emphasizing the fundamental role of democratic stakeholders, namely parliaments, civil society organizations and campaigners for equality, in formulating, implementing, monitoring and assessing gender-responsive budgeting and its impact on the lives of women and men,

Welcoming the progress made by numerous countries in introducing gender-responsive budgeting based on institutional and legislative reforms, which have promoted the irreversible integration of the gender dimension into public policy,

Affirming that in order to realize the development goals, it is necessary to identify new approaches based on balanced development models fostering the equal enjoyment by men and women of their fundamental rights and combating poverty, disparities and exclusion,

Call upon decision makers and the international community to commit to improving financing, capacities, data collection, monitoring and accountability with a view to promoting gender equality through the following means:

- Adopting a universal normative human rights framework and adjusting public policies accordingly;
- Ensuring the compatibility of cross-cutting public policies in the light of the universal and indivisible nature of rights;
- Strengthening performance-based budgeting through the continuous integration of results-based management into Government targets, mandates and programmes open to gender-responsive locally based management;
- Coordinating the work of the stakeholders, comprising the executive, the legislative, the judiciary, civil society and technical and financial partners, through monitoring and evaluation taking into consideration gender-responsive indicators;
- Mobilizing and allocating sufficient funds for development programmes in the context of a funding model based on respect for international conventions and obligations and agreements on human rights, decent work, equality of men and women, environmental sustainability and the rights of persons with disabilities;
- Strengthening an environment conducive to development, knowledge management and sharing, and the exchange of skills and good practices in respect of gender-responsive budgeting, including South-South and triangular cooperation and global initiatives.

Marrakesh, 10 November 2012